Attending the official opening of the Virginia Public Safety Training Center (VPSTC), from left: Sen. Ryan McDougle, Secretary of Public Safety Marla Graff Decker, Department of Juvenile Justice Director Mark Gooch, VPSTC Director Patrick Bridge.

VIRGINIA PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CENTER OFFICIALLY OPENS

Former Hanover Juvenile Correctional Center Will Serve Multiple Agencies

Hanover, VA, Sept. 20 – The Virginia Public Safety Training Center (VPSTC) officially opened Sept. 19 at a ceremony attended by representatives of eight Commonwealth of Virginia departments that will benefit from the full-service training facility which offers newly-renovated classrooms, a gymnasium, conference space, outdoor training areas, and a newly constructed building to be used exclusively by the Virginia State Police.

The VPSTC is located at the site of the former Hanover Juvenile Correctional Center, which the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) closed earlier this year after nearly a century of distinguished service helping to rehabilitate incarcerated youth.

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"We're very excited about the improved training experience we can offer to agencies whose main mission is public safety," said Secretary of Public Safety Marla Graff Decker. "By sharing training resources and enhancing coordination with our public safety partners and other future tenants, we believe we can better serve the people of the Commonwealth."

In addition to DJJ, Commonwealth partner agencies include:

- Department of Corrections
- Department of Emergency Management
- Department of Fire Programs
- Department of Forensic Science
- Department of Health
- Department of Military Affairs
- Virginia State Police

DJJ's Training and Development Department will serve as administrators of the Center, providing training and work space to other state agencies with a public safety or emergency preparedness mission. The Virginia State Police will be the sole occupant of the new building just completed at the site.

"The VPSTC is a convenient training center for the core partner agencies to share resources, ideas, expertise, and best practices in a collaborative and cost effective way," said DJJ Director Mark Gooch. "There is ample training space that can be reserved which includes free parking, fully-equipped training rooms, conference space, a computer lab, audio-visual production capability, and even outdoor training space in a way that is far more efficient than conventional hotel space or renting of other private facilities."

DJJ will use the facility to provide training to all of its employees, including juvenile correctional officers, and will offer a variety of classes to security and non-security employees alike. For other agencies, the Center will serve a multitude of purposes. For example, The Virginia Department of Emergency Management will conduct classroom training as well as search and rescue training on the outside

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Smyth Hall (above) contains training classrooms; there also is a gymnasium and several other buildings on the spacious campus that can accommodate a variety of training scenarios.

grounds, said VDEM Public Affairs Director Bob Spieldenner; the Department of Forensic Science plans to conduct portions of its nine-week Forensic Science Academy, specifically Forensic Entomology and Forensic Archaeology, at the facility. The Academy encompasses the various aspects of crime scene technology, said DFS Director of Technical Services Alka B. Lohmann.

Leading the facility's transition has been DJJ's Director of Training and Development Patrick Bridge, who will also serve as the chief administrator for VPSTC. "The interagency cooperation during this process has been phenomenal," Bridge said. "Based on our progress in this short time, the partnership has already been a success. We look forward to working together to enhance public safety training for employees throughout Virginia."

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